

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in the subject application. Claims 1-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14, 16, and 18 have been amended and claims 2 and 12 have been canceled without prejudice. Accordingly, after entry of this amendment, the pending claims will be 1, 3-11, and 13-20.

The Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough examination of the subject application and respectfully request reconsideration of the subject application based on the above amendments and the following remarks.

35 U.S.C. § 103(a) REJECTIONS

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-20 under 35 USC 103(a) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Number 6,091,927 to Hattori, et al. ("Hattori" or the "Hattori Reference") in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,266,512 to de Koning, et al. ("de Koning" or the "de Koning Reference"). Claims 1 and 11 have been amended to include the subject matter of claims 2 and 12, respectively. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections in view of the above amendments and for reasons detailed below.

The invention as claimed discloses an image forming apparatus with a controller that elevates/lowers the document tray based on data from sensors on the guide-in roller to supply and convey documents "according to the mount state of the documents." Specification, Abstract; page 21, lines 13-17. When a document is mounted on a sheet storing unit, an optical contact detector detects a contact state between the topmost layer of the sheets stored in the sheet storing means and the sheet conveying means. Depending on the contact state, the sheet conveying unit can be elevated or lowered.

More specifically, as recited in claims 1 and 11, the controller measures dimensions of a sheet stored in the sheet storing unit on the basis of a detection result of the position detector; judges whether or not the sheet corresponds to the

standard sized sheet information stored in the storing unit, on the basis of the measured dimensions; and controls the elevation/lowering driving unit to elevate the sheet storing unit when it is judged that the sheet corresponds to the standard sized sheet information.

The Examiner rejects the invention as claimed based by combining the sheet feeding table of Hattori and an adjustable guide of de Koning. According to the Hattori, reference documents (5) can be stacked on a table (6). Once the documents (5) are sensed by a set sensor or document sensing means (21) and/or a bottom plate sensor (34), a motor (33) immediately raises the bottom plate (7) until the topmost sheet (5) in the stack comes into contact with a pick-up roller (8) so that sheets (5) from the stack can be removed one by one from the topmost layer. More particularly, the set sensor or document sensing means (21) merely senses the weight of the documents (5) before raising the raising member (7) in one of two modes of operation. See, e.g., Hattori, col. 6, lines 21-40.

Alternatively, the bottom plate sensor (34) can sense the position of the bottom plate (7) after the power switch is activated. If the bottom plate (7) is at its lowermost position, the sensor (34) will hold it there. If, however, the bottom plate (7) is not at its lowermost position, the sensor (34) will lower it to that position. See, e.g., Id., col. 8, lines 1-9. Once at its lowermost position, the bottom plate (7) can be raised by the set sensor (21) until the topmost document (5) contacts the pick-up roller (8).

Thus, Hattori does not teach, mention or suggest a sheet feeding apparatus that determines that a sheet is set in the proper position using a regulating unit that regulates a sheet by acting on the sheet set on the sheet tray, i.e., elevating the sheet, once the sheet size is judged to be of standard size. Thus, the size of the sheet as set is measured by the position of the regulating unit, and under the control in which the sheet as set is judged as the standard size based on the detecting result, the controller drives a driving device unit to elevate a sheet storing unit so as to put the sheet in the feeding state. Accordingly, the invention as claimed is not made obvious by Hattori in view of de Koning.

With respect to claim 10 and 20, Hattori, further, does not teach, mention or suggest an optical sensor or an optical sensor that detects "a contact state between the topmost layer of the sheets stored in the sheet storing means and the sheet conveying means" as recited in claims 10 and 20. Nor does the de Koning reference make up for the deficiency in the Hattori reference. Indeed, de Koning also does not teach, mention or suggest a suggest an optical sensor or an optical sensor that detects "a contact state between the topmost layer of the sheets stored in the sheet storing means and the sheet conveying means" as recited in claims 10 and 20.

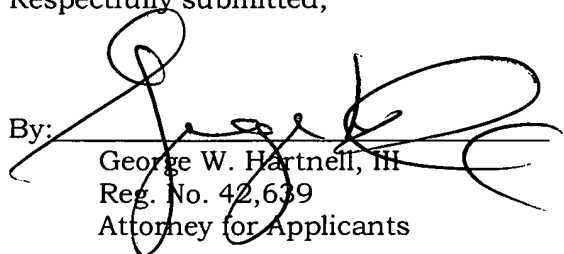
Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that, the claims are not made obvious by Hattori in view of de Koning and, moreover, satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 100, et seq., especially § 103(a). As such, the Applicants believe that the claims are allowable. Moreover, it is respectfully submitted that the subject application is in condition for allowance. Early and favorable action is requested.

The Applicants believe that no additional fee is required for consideration of the within Response. However, if for any reason the fee paid is inadequate or credit is owed for any excess fee paid, you are hereby authorized and requested to charge Deposit Account No. **04-1105**.

Respectfully submitted,

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